

### Remembering Ronald Reagan

*(Representative Ron Paul in the congressional record, Wednesday June 9th)* Mr. Speaker, all Americans mourn the death of President Ronald Reagan, but those of us who had the opportunity to know him are especially saddened. I got to know President Reagan in 1976 when, as a freshman congressman, I was one of only four members of that body to endorse then-Governor Reagan's primary challenge to President Gerald Ford. I had the privilege of serving as the leader of President Reagan's Texas delegation at the Republican convention of 1976, where Ronald Reagan almost defeated an incumbent president for his party's nomination.

I was one of the millions attracted to Ronald Reagan by his strong support for limited government and the free-market. I felt affinity for a politician who based his conservative philosophy on "... a desire for less government interference or less centralized authority or more individual freedom..." I wish more of today's conservative leaders based their philosophy on a desire for less government and more freedom.

Ronald Reagan was one of the most eloquent exponents of the freedom philosophy in modern American politics. One of his greatest achievements was converting millions of Americans to the freedom philosophy; many he inspired became active in the freedom movement. One of the best examples of President Reagan's rhetorical powers was his first major national political address, "A Time for Choosing." Delivered in 1964 in support of the Goldwater presidential campaign, this speech launched Ronald Reagan's career as both a politician and a leader of the conservative movement. The following excerpt from that speech illustrates the power of Ronald Reagan's words and message. Unfortunately, these words are as relevant to our current situation as they were when he delivered them in 1964:

It's time we asked ourselves if we still know the freedoms intended for us by the Founding Fathers. James Madison said, "We base all our experiments on the capacity of mankind for self-government."

This idea - that government was beholden to the people, that it had no other source of power - is still the newest, most unique idea in all the long history of man's relation to man. This is the issue of this election: Whether we believe in our capacity for self-government or whether we abandon the American Revolution and confess that a little intellectual elite in a far-distant

capital can plan our lives for us better than we can plan them ourselves.

You and I are told we must choose between a left or right, but I suggest there is no such thing as a left or right. There is only an up or down. Up to man's age-old dream - the maximum of individual freedom consistent with order, or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism.

Regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives, those who would sacrifice freedom for security have embarked on this downward path. Plutarch warned, "The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits." The Founding Fathers knew a government can't control the economy without controlling people. And they knew when a government set out to do that, it must use force and coercion to achieve its purpose. So we have come to a time for choosing.

One of the most direct expressions of Ronald Reagan's disdain for big government came during a private conversation I shared with him when flying from the White House to Andrews Air Force Base. As the helicopter passed over the monuments, we looked down and he said, "Isn't that beautiful? It's amazing how much terrible stuff comes out of this city when it's that beautiful."

While many associate Ronald Reagan with unbridled militarism, he was a lifelong opponent of the draft. It is hardly surprising that many of the most persuasive and powerful arguments against conscription came from President Reagan. One of my favorite Reagan quotes comes from a 1979 article he wrote for the conservative publication Human Events regarding the draft and related "national service" proposals:

"...it [conscription] rests on the assumption that your kids belong to the state. If we buy that assumption then it is for the state- not for parents, the community, the religious institutions or teachers- to decide who shall have what values and who shall do what work, when, where and how in our society. That assumption isn't a new one. The Nazis thought it was a great idea."

I extend my deepest sympathies to Ronald Reagan's family and friends, especially his beloved

wife Nancy and his children. I also urge my colleagues and all Americans to honor Ronald Reagan by dedicating themselves to the principles of limited government and individual liberty.